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Trabajo de Fin de Máster

Overcoming speaking anxiety: an intervention proposal for 1st of ESO students

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ABSTRACT

Developing speaking skills is necessary and indispensable for learning English as a foreign language (EFL) nowadays. Unfortunately, many learners suffer from foreign language speaking anxiety, a fear that can hinder their learning process. This project has a theoretical part that includes a reflection about speaking skills' importance, an analysis of speaking anxiety and all its factors, and a selection of activities that can be used in the EFL classroom to improve speaking skills. It also includes an analysis of previous studies about this topic. The practical part is dedicated to the design of our own proposal. It aims to help 1st-ESO students reduce speaking anxiety in the EFL classroom through activities that are intended to achieve a supportive classroom environment and make students gain confidence. We also hope that this project could be the starting point for new projects and the future implementation of the proposal.

RESUMEN

En la actualidad, el desarrollo de las habilidades comunicativas resulta necesario e indispensable en el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera. Desafortunadamente, muchos estudiantes sufren ansiedad al hablar una lengua extranjera, un miedo que puede dificultar su proceso de aprendizaje. El presente proyecto cuenta con una parte teórica que incluye una reflexión sobre la importancia de las habilidades comunicativas, un análisis de la ansiedad al hablar y sus factores, así como una selección de actividades que pueden utilizarse en el aula de inglés para mejorar las habilidades previamente mencionadas. Asimismo, también incluye un análisis de estudios previos sobre este tema. La parte práctica consiste en el diseño de nuestra propuesta, cuyo objetivo es ayudar a los estudiantes de 1º de ESO a reducir su ansiedad al hablar en la clase de inglés como lengua extranjera a través de actividades que pretenden conseguir un ambiente favorable y hacer que los alumnos ganen confianza. Esperamos que este estudio sea el punto de partida para futuras investigaciones y la futura implementación de la propuesta.

1. INTRODUCTION AND JUSTIFICATION

The mastery of other languages besides the mother tongue is essential nowadays. Specifically, EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learning has become fundamental as English is regarded as a *lingua franca* today. Taking these demands into account, education must give importance to the learning of this language and also implement teaching methods that prioritize the development of the speaking skill. Unfortunately, there are some factors that can hinder the development of this skill, as is the case of speaking anxiety, which can be described as "a fear experienced by learners when speaking to one person or many people" (Tadjouri, 2017, p. 9).

The reason for the choice of this topic is the debilitating effect speaking anxiety has on learning. Some students, even though they have been studying English for so many years, still find it difficult to speak English in front or with other people. During high school and college, students have to face different speaking situations, sometimes as final tasks in which they have to demonstrate that they are able to communicate and to speak in public in a foreign language. The problem comes when these students do not have the opportunity to practice or improve this capacity during the academic year, that is, when they are expected to do these speaking activities well without being provided with the tools, tips and practice they need to achieve it. During speaking situations, students that experience this anxiety could feel extremely nervous, their voice tremble, they could feel their heart beating so fast, and they are not able to do these tasks as well as they could. "Even though anxiety might not be the most important reason for failure or success in learning, we cannot ignore its affection" (Rita, Mohamad, Dalila, Nadhia and Wahid, 2018, p.66). For this reason, this project aims to design an intervention proposal that can help students reduce speaking anxiety in the EFL classroom, as we think this aspect should be given more consideration.

With the aim of presenting the different sections of this project, a brief description of each of them is shown below. First, the objectives of the project are explained in order to clarify what is intended to be achieved with it. Then, the literature review that helped us with the theoretical foundations on which the proposal is based, and the analysis of previous studies about this topic can be found. The next section shows the intervention proposal itself, which includes

objectives, contents, methodology, timing, sessions, activities and assessment. After that, there is the discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal and also the conclusions we have reached upon the completion of the project. Finally, we have included the references, that aim to facilitate all the literature sources that have been used as a guide for the preparation of this project, and the annexes, that aim to present the supporting documents referred to throughout the document.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives we want to achieve through the development of this project are the following ones.

Main objective:

- To design an intervention proposal to help students reduce speaking anxiety in the EFL classroom. This proposal is addressed to 1st-ESO students and aims to reduce the negatives effects this anxiety could have on these students' achievement.

Specific objectives:

- To reflect on the importance of the speaking skills in EFL learning. This reflection will highlight the necessity of our proposal, as speaking anxiety hinder the development of these skills.

- To define speaking anxiety.

Thanks to the definitions given by different authors and experts, we will be able to understand the problem we are confronting and, as a result, try to find effective solutions for it.

- To analyze types, levels, causes and symptoms of speaking anxiety. This process will help us be aware of the factors that are related to this anxiety in order to take them into account in the design of our proposal.

- To give an overview of activities that can help students improve their speaking skills.

This collection will be a support for the proposal, as it helps in ensuring that the activities we have relied on to its design facilitate the development of speaking skills.

- To analyze the results of previous studies as a guide for the design of the proposal.

These results will be the scaffolding we will use to try to design an successful and effective proposal.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Speaking skill

3.1.1 Definition of speaking

Speaking is one of the four skills learners need in order to communicate in an effective way. Tadjouri (2017, p.6) stated that speaking is "a complex process that requires students' ability to express themselves orally, coherently, fluently and appropriately in a given meaningful context". Joyce (1197 as cited in Tadjouri, 2017) explained that speaking is a process that involves producing, receiving and processing information. Harmer (2007) added that speakers of English should be able to speak in different situations and use conversational strategies, so students are expected to develop their conversational skills as their English improves.

3.1.2 Importance of speaking

The students who are able to speak English well and fluently may have better chances of getting further education, finding employment and obtaining promotion (Baker and Westrup, 2003 as cited in Tadjouri, 2017). The speaking skill is influenced by many different factors including anxiety, the one that will be the focus of our research.

3.2 Speaking anxiety

In educational context, anxiety is a complex concept related to the learner's psychology, specifically to their feelings of fear, insecurity, worry, agitation, misgiving, etc., their self-confidence and their self-esteem. Tobias (1986, as cited in Asari, 2015) further stated that it is not only a complex concept that depends on one's feelings but also on appraisals concerning the threats inherent in some situations.

The anxiety learners feel in foreign language learning contexts is known as "foreign language anxiety" or "language anxiety". This concept has been defined in many studies since 1970s (Hammad, 2017). Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986, p. 128) defined it as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process". MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) also explained that it is the feeling of apprehension and tension associated with foreign or second language contexts, including listening, speaking and learning.

Language anxiety is associated with positive and negative effects (Chen, 2015). Alpert and Haber (1960 as cited in Marcos-Llinás and Garau, 2009) distinguished two types of anxiety: facilitative and debilitating. According to Young (1986, p.440), facilitative anxiety "is an increase in drive level which results in improved performance". On the other hand, debilitating anxiety is considered "to be harmful and to impede performance and achievement" (Ansari, 2015, p.40). While students who feel the former accept risk as a part of their language learning process and feel motivated to learn more about the foreign language, the students that suffer from the debilitating one have feelings of insecurity or fear and could also suffer from poor performance (Marcos-Llinás and Garau, 2009).

The anxiety learners feel in occasions in which speaking is involved is known as speaking anxiety (Ansari, 2015). Gaibani and Elmenfi (2016, p.179) defined it as "a type of shyness characterized by fear about communicating with people". It has been shown that language anxiety is related to speaking more than to any other skill (Horwitz et al., 1986). One of the main reasons for this could be the nature of speaking, since it involves the spontaneous manifestation of knowledge. Another reason may be the deficient speaking opportunities in schools where the most recurrent experience is listening to the teacher (Sadegui, Mohammadi and Sedathathotfar, 2013). These authors also stated that speaking anxiety is "a serious educational catastrophe" (p. 118). Speaking anxiety, communication apprehension and speech anxiety terms are used interchangeably because they refer to the same concept (Tadjouri, 2017).

3.2.1 Types of speaking anxiety

Toubot et al. (2017) indicated that there are four different types of speaking anxiety:

1. Trait like

Many of the studies of the past decade focused on this type of speaking anxiety and defined it as "a fixed quality of an individual such as trait determined by genetic factors" (Toubot et al. 2017, p. 1940). However, according to Beatty, McCroskey and Heisel (1998), this anxiety does not meet with this rigid interpretation of trait because it should not be construed as a personality-type variable. Trait-like speaking anxiety can be changed, despite its highly resistant to change (Toubot et al., 2017). It is experienced in situations where the

speaker communicates with others in interviews conversations, small groups or other situations, but not in the ones with close friends or family members (Kamridah, Yassi, Arafah and Imran, 2015).

2. Generalized context

Generalized context speaking anxiety is considered as "a quite continual, personality-type orientation toward communication in a given type of context" (McCroskey, 2009 as quoted in Toubot et al., 2017, p. 1940). This author also divided this anxiety into four categories: public speaking, speaking in meetings or classes, speaking in small group discussion and speaking in dyadic interactions. Learners who suffer from this may feel anxious only in some situations but not in others (Kamridah et al., 2015). This means that the different types of communication setting that provoke anxiety are not the same for all learners (Toubot et al., 2017).

3. Personal group

Personal group speaking anxiety "represents the reactions of an individual to communicating with a given group of individual or group of individuals across time" (McCroskey, 2012, as cited in Toubot et al., 2017, p. 1941). People who feel anxious when speaking to a specific person or group as supervisors or professors suffer from this type of anxiety (Kamridah et al., 2015).

4. Situational or state-like

Situational speaking anxiety is "an emotional response of anxiety when interacting with other person in the given time" (Kamridah et al., 2015, p. 1660). Frantz, Marlow and Wathen (2015, as cited in Toubot et al., 2017, p. 1941) further stated that state- like speaking anxiety is "an experience closely connected to a certain situation at a certain time and might be considered as a reaction to a surrounding stimulus". This implies that individuals can feel anxious with a particular person o group in a certain place and at a certain time but not in another place or at another time. For instance, a student may not feel apprehensive when he or she asks a teacher about a project but he or she may feel nervous and anxious if the teacher tell that student to meet with him or her after class. Therefore, Toubot et al. (2017, p.1941) concluded that state-like speaking anxiety "fluctuates according to the changes in the constraints introduced by the time, space and other person or group".

3.2.2 Levels of speaking anxiety

1. Low: It is a normal reaction to experience some speaking anxiety before speaking. People who feel low speaking anxiety have the ability to control it, so they decline their anxiety with the progress of the speech (Tadjouri, 2017). This author also concluded that this level of anxiety motivates students to continue speaking.

2. Moderate: "Students who experience moderate anxiety may simply procrastinate in doing homework, avoid speaking in class, or crouch in the last row" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p.131). This means that this level of speaking anxiety affects students negatively.

3. High: "Individuals with high apprehension of communication tend to avoid situations where communication might be required and, as consequence, fail to receive the rewards normally associated with interaction" (McCroskey et al., 1997 as quoted in Tadjouri, 2017, p. 20). That is, students with moderate and high level of speaking anxiety are negatively affected so they are motivated to stop speaking.

3.2.3 Causes of speaking anxiety

- Personal causes:

1. Heredity and personality

Social biologist showed that infants differ with regards to their sociability. This has an effect on the interaction with their environment, which has an impact on the levels of speaking anxiety. Nowadays, many researchers agree that there might be a heredity component, although there is not a speaking anxiety gene (Toubot et al., 2017). Jung and McCroskey (2004 as quoted in Toubot et al., 2017, p. 1941) explained "people are born with particular personality predispositions which affect how they will respond to environment stimuli". Self-esteem plays a very important role with regard to personality. People with low esteem are inclined to have a high level of anxiety in speaking situations because of their lack of confidence (McCroskey, 1977, as cited in Tadjouri, 2017).

2. Reinforcement

Researchers pointed out that children who are involved in a positive communication environment in which their parents praise their efforts are inclined to continue with these patterns of interaction, while children who are

scolded in matters relating to foreign language will develop high levels of speaking anxiety (McCroskey and Daly, 1984 as quoted in Toubot et al., 2017).

3. Lack of vocabulary

Tadjouri (2017, p. 14) affirmed that "students hesitate to speak the foreign language because of the limited amount of vocabulary that they have to express their thoughts and views". Learners are enabled and afraid to express their ideas in the foreign language because they do not have a rich vocabulary. Liu (2007) showed in his study that learners feel they cannot speak the language because they do not know what to do when they come to a new word they never knew before. This means that having a poor vocabulary pushes students not to be relaxed in the classroom (Tadjouri, 2017).

4. Lack of preparation

In Liu's study mentioned before, he affirmed that "it is clear that preparation could enhance students' confidence in speaking English" (p. 129). Lack of preparation makes learners feel anxious in oral discussions. This is the reason why they do not want to participate in this type of activities (Tadjouri, 2017). The majority of students feel more confident and less apprehensive to speak a foreign language and think they can speak clearly, if they are well prepared (Tadjouri, 2017).

5. Lack of practice:

As already mentioned, lack of practice could be one of the main causes of speaking anxiety, as a result of deficient speaking opportunities in the classroom. To develop and improve communication skills of a foreign language, classroom interaction needs to be engaged and students need to be motivated (Tadjouri, 2017). The loss of these skills increases levels of speaking anxiety which creates a vicious circle (Drinkwater and Vreken, 1998 as quoted in Toubot et al., 2017). Tadjouri (2017, p. 15) stated that "the more students are passive in the classroom, the more they are anxious to speak". Liu (2007) also considered that learners have no chance to speak the foreign language in every day conversations.

6. Fear of being the centre of attention

This cause of speaking anxiety is directly connected with the previous one. Students do not have sufficient practice on this skill and, as a consequence, they feel afraid and shy of being the centre of others' attention (Liu, 2007).

7. Fear of making mistakes

Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009) affirmed that foreign language speaking anxiety stem from fear of committing mistakes and the consequent fear of negative evaluation. Many students are afraid of making mistakes of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, and of receiving negative evaluation from their peers (Tadjouri, 2017). "The level of self-confidence is one of the most important factors provoking anxiety because, when students experience high self-confidence, they are not afraid of making mistakes or having other students laugh at them" (Atas, 2015, p. 962)

8. Gender

Mejias (1991, as quoted in Tadjouri, 2017) discovered that female learners show higher communication apprehension scores than males. Furthermore, Ayu and Nadhia (2008, as cited in Tadjouri, 2017) also showed in their study that, although both genders feel nervous or insecure when asked to speak in class, female students feel more anxious and apprehensive. The same result has been found by Ozturk and Gurbuz (2012, as cited in Rogland-Harutunian, 2017) as their research showed that females experience more worry and anxiety speaking English compare to males.

9. Age

Gaibani and Elmenfi (2016) supported previous results that were obtained in different previous studies as is the case of Horwitz (1995 as quoted in Gaibani and Elmenfi, 2016) since they indicated that differences in ages have an important influence on speaking anxiety. They also showed that speaking anxiety go on the other way with age, that is, younger students feel more anxiety when speaking in public.

- Interpersonal causes

1. Competition

This interpersonal cause is directly linked to the personal cause fear of making mistakes. Wrench et al. (2012, cited in Tadjouri, 2017, p. 18) concluded that "the degree of perceived similarity between you and your audience can influence your level of speech anxiety". Students often compare their English levels to others, so they believe that committing a mistake shows that they are not as good or as advanced as other students, which creates speaking anxiety

between them in the classroom. Young (1991, as cited in Tadjouri, 2017) affirmed that competition is one of the seeds of learners' language anxiety.

2. Teacher's role

Teachers' behavior has a direct impact on students' speaking anxiety. Toubot et al. (2017, p. 1943) stated that "teachers who organize, carry out tasks and assess students' performance undeniably play a pivotal part in addressing speaking anxiety". Furthermore, learners may experience speaking anxiety as a consequence of being inappropriately corrected by the teacher (Tadjouri, 2017). Several manners of correcting students, such as comparing students to others, humiliating them or forcing them to talk, can lead to higher degrees of this anxiety. Teachers are required to tolerate students' mistakes and accept them as individuals, and, also, to encourage students who suffer from this anxiety to continue speaking despite their mistakes (Toubot et al., 2017). This author also emphasized that mistakes are considered as a natural part of the learning process.

3. The classroom

To prevent and overcome speaking anxiety, there must be a comfortable and supportive environment in the classroom. Hannah (2013, as cited in Tadjouri, 2017) stated that classroom environment play a determining role in keeping learners engaged. In addition, "a context with limited speaking activities, no technology, and large classes can contribute in a way or in another in the progress of speaking anxiety among learners" (Tadjouri, 2017, p 19).

3.2.4 *Symptoms of speaking anxiety*

The symptoms associated with speaking anxiety are divided into three different types.

1. Physiological symptoms: These correspond to the physical symptoms, in other words, to the ones that are observed on individual's bodies, including fast heartbeat, clammy hands, nausea, dry mouth, trembling voice, leg shaking and rapid breathing (Tadjouri, 2017).

2. Behavioral symptoms: The most common behavior in students with speaking anxiety is avoiding the speaking situation. "This person handicapped by communication apprehension would be expected to avoid communication much of the time because he or she would experience negative reactions from anxiety that would surpass projected gain from interaction" (McCroskey, 1976,

as cited in Tadjouri, 2017, p. 10). Apart from this, students who suffer from speaking anxiety prefer to keep silent, feel undecided about expressing his/her views, often consider others' questions as criticisms, do not feel safe and do not want to talk with other people and feel embarrassed (Tadjouri, 2017).

3. Psychological symptoms: Kanar (2011 as cited in Tadjouri, 2017) stated that students with speaking anxiety experience disorganized thoughts and negative self-talk, feel inadequacy and forget what to say.

3.3 Activities to improve speaking skills

This section shows a selection of different activities and games that are used in the EFL classroom in order to improve speaking skills, according to Harmer (2007).

- Playscripts: Harmer (2007) explained that students should treat playscripts as real acting, that is, they should go through the scripts paying special attention to stress, speed and intonation. Hamilton and Mcleod (1993, as cited in Atas, 2015) stated that the use of drama techniques fits perfectly into the nature of language learning. The use of drama in the classroom also helps in building students' confidence, in developing their empathy for others, in contextualizing language and in practicing gesture as eye contact, movement or facial expression (Harmer, 2007). Atas (2015) pointed out that the advantage of using drama in classroom has not been completely appreciated in foreign language learning.

- Acting out dialogues: It is necessary to create a supportive atmosphere in the class, and this is why students should be given time to rehearse their dialogues and to work on them before choosing one to perform in front of the class (Harmer, 2007).

- Information gap-games: In these games, students have to speak with their partners to solve a puzzle, put things in order or find similarities and differences (Harmer, 2007).

- Television and radio games: Harmer (2007, p. 349) explains that "when imported into the classroom, games from radio and TV often provide good fluency activities". He gave some examples as *Just a Minute*, a comedy contest on UK radio in which participants have to speak for 60 seconds on a topic they are given.

- Buzz groups: These activities include many types of discussion and consists of, for example, predicting the context of a text or having a quick conversation about different topics, etc. (Harmer, 2007)

- Instant comment: Instant comment activities, as showing them photographs and asking them to say the first thing that comes to their mind help students in training how to respond fluently and immediately (Harmer, 2007).

- Formal debates: In formal debates, students prepare arguments in favor or against different topics (Harmer, 2007). This author also concluded that "in order for debate to be successful, students need to be given time to plan their arguments, often in groups" (p. 350).

- Unplanned discussion: Some discussion just happen in the middle of lessons; they are unprepared by the teacher, but, if encourage, can provide some of the most enjoyable and productive speaking in language classes (Harmer, 2007). This author stated that the success of this activity depends on the teachers' ability to encourage students through a correct attitude towards errors and mistakes.

- Reaching consensus: Since it forces learners to reach a consensus, this activity is considered one of the best ways of improving and encouraging discussion (Harmer, 2007).

- Oral presentations: Teachers should invest time in the procedures and processes for the oral presentation to be beneficial, so they need to give students time to prepare and rehearse their presentations (Harmer, 2007). Harmer also explained that it is very important to give students other tasks to do while a classmate is making his/her presentation, such as feedback tasks.

- Questionnaires: Questionnaires "may well encourage the natural use of certain repetitive language patterns - and thus can be situated in the middle of our communication continuum" (Harmer, 2007, p. 352). This author also concluded that these activities are very useful because their results could be used as the basis of written work, discussions or oral presentations.

- Simulation and role-play: In simulations and role-plays, students simulate a real-life meeting as they were in the real world. For this reason, students need to know the situation exactly and have enough information about the background (Harmer, 2007). This author also pointed out three advantages for using simulation and role-play in the classroom: it is motivating and fun, it

makes students do not take the same responsibility for what they say like when they speak from themselves, and it allows them to use an extensive range of language because they include in the classroom the world outside.

4. PREVIOUS STUDIES

Over the past few years, several studies have been conducted in connection with speaking anxiety in English as Foreign Language (EFL) learning.

Buitrago and Ayala (2008) conducted a study to find out what kind of strategies and activities help students to overcome speaking anxiety and feel more confident when expressing themselves orally. For that purpose, they used surveys to collect information about students' interests, to know their experiences and emotions in oral practices. The study was carried out in a public school of Bogotá, Colombia, and about 1500 secondary students participated on it. One important finding of this study was that, despite efforts to build a supportive learning environment, it is very difficult to have perfect classrooms for everybody. Another important finding was that in activities as reciting a poem, reading a text or singing there is not oral interaction in terms of real communication because they are just memorizing. In this regard, the results of the study also showed that cultural activities are a valuable option to create free-stress environment and encourage English learning in the classroom.

Another research about overcoming foreign language speaking anxiety in the English classroom was conducted by Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009). The main objective of it was to provide English teachers with useful suggestions that help students to reduce this anxiety, to promote motivation to learn and to increase English language acquisition. The participants were fifteen students in the third grade (13-14 years) of a secondary school in Greece. Semi-structured interviews, group discussion and direct observation were used as data collection. The results showed that six of these students were experiencing speaking anxiety because of the fear of negative evaluation from their peers and the perception of low ability in comparison with their peers. This study concluded that the interventions to reduce this anxiety should be project work, establishing a learning community and a supportive classroom atmosphere, considering error as a natural part of learning, providing indirect rather than direct correction, accepting the need for self worth protection and provision of praise.

The study conducted by Ozturk and Gurbuz (2014) investigated levels, causes, determining factors and students' perceptions of EFL speaking anxiety

through a questionnaire and interviews. The participants were Turkish university students. 383 of them carried out the questionnaire, and 19 the interviews. Results showed that students feel low level of this anxiety because of the fact that being able to speak English in Turkey is a great advantage in many areas so students try to improve their speaking skills. However, results also revealed that most of the students perceive speaking skill as a factor that provokes anxiety.

This study also identifies the situations in which students experience anxiety while speaking English. All the situations have a significant influence on learners' speaking anxiety, but the most common ones were, as shown in the following table, being not prepared in advance, being exposed to immediate questions and forgetting appropriate words.

Table 1. Situations causing anxiety for students while they are speaking English

Codes	Frequency
When I forget or cannot remember appropriate words	7
When I am not prepared in advance for speaking	9
When I cannot pronounce the words correctly	6
When I am exposed to immediate questions	7
When I have to speak in front of the class	4
When I cannot make sentences	5
When I know that my turn is coming	5

(Ozturk and Gurbuz, 2014, p. 7)

Other important aspects revealed in this study are the reasons for foreign language speaking anxiety among these students. The highest frequency was for the fact that students believe they are learning a language they are not familiar with, so using unfamiliarity forms to express ideas makes them feel anxious. It should also be mentioned that not knowing how to say what they think is another remarkable reason for speaking anxiety.

The study also shows that more than fifty percent of the students worry about making pronunciation and vocabulary mistakes and about the reactions of their friends while speaking.

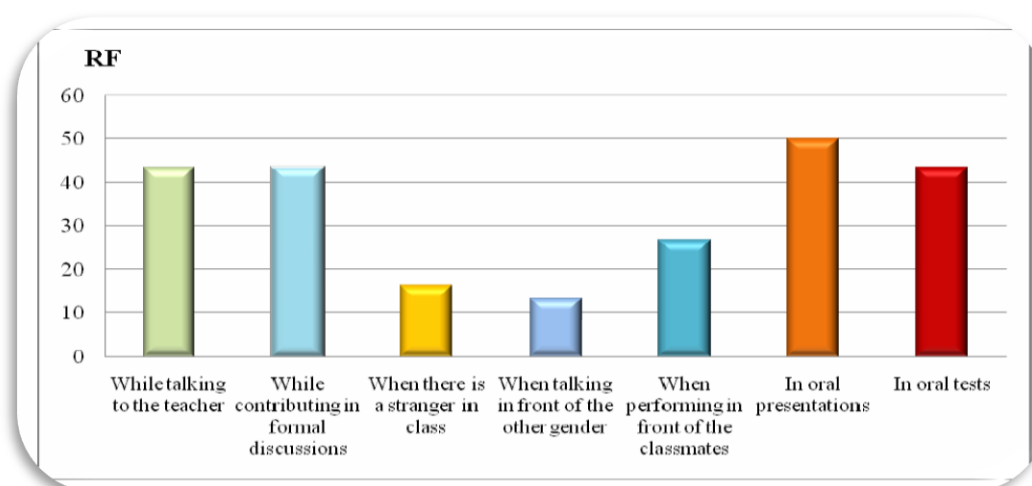
Rogland-Harutunian (2017) conducted a study designed to identify the factors teachers recognize as contributing to speaking anxiety in the classroom

and how can teachers support students who suffer from speaking anxiety. This study took place in Lund, Sweden, and the participants were two secondary-school teachers who have taught English for several years. The method this author used for the study was interviewing these teachers. Thanks to the results, it is clear that speaking anxiety that affects students does not have one singular cause or reason and manifests itself within any speaker. These teachers pointed out that negative atmosphere within the classroom and the absence of foundation of prior minor speaking assignments were the main obstacles that demoralize students when speaking in front of others. About the second issue, they affirmed that teachers can support anxious students by establishing a relation with them where they feel comfortable and not afraid of asking questions. Trying to build a positive relation between classmates is also a very important aspect teachers should take into account.

Tadjouri (2017) conducted a case study research at Abu Belkaid University (Tlemcen, Argelia) in order to investigate the issue of communication apprehension from different perspectives. For the study, the author used a test and a questionnaire for second year EFL students, classroom observation and, also, an interview with teachers. Students' test and questionnaire pointed out that, although there are not many students with high level of speaking anxiety, the number of them that experience medium speaking anxiety is alarming.

The study also shows the different situations in which students feel speaking anxiety. As shown in the following table, the situations that reached the highest frequency are oral presentations, followed by oral tests and talking to their teacher and contributions in formal discussions.

Table 2. Situations of speaking anxiety



(Tadjouri, 2017, p.40)

In addition, the study pointed out that lack of linguistic competence and lack of preparation are the principal causes of speak anxiety among these students, as well as lack of preparation.

Mestan's (2017) study investigated, using a questionnaire as data collection, speaking anxiety among different grades, ages and genders of EFL students in Turkey. The participants of this study were 80 students from different secondary schools. The study showed that negative feelings are one of the most important causes of speaking anxiety and that students should not be forced to speak when learning a new language without providing them positive support, because students require teacher's help to overcome this anxiety.

5. INTERVENTION PROPOSAL

5.1 Objectives

The objectives we want students to achieve with this proposal are:

- Main objective:
 - To help 1ESO students reduce speaking anxiety in the EFL classroom
- Specific objectives:
 - To create a positive and supportive classroom atmosphere
 - To help students develop speaking skills
 - To encourage group work
 - To encourage student's participation in the classroom

5.2 Contents

According to the curriculum, that is, *Ley Orgánica 8/2013, de 9 de diciembre*, *Real Decreto 1105/2014, de 26 de diciembre* and *Decreto 19/2015, de 12 de junio*, the contents that are included in this intervention proposal are the ones related to the block of production and oral texts included in the table below.

Table 3. Production and oral texts contents of the proposal

Bloque II. Producción de textos orales: expresión e interacción	
Estrategias de producción	
Ejecución	- Expresar el mensaje con claridad, coherencia, estructurándolo adecuadamente y ajustándose, en su caso, a los modelos y fórmulas de cada tipo de texto
	- Apoyarse en y sacar el máximo partido de los conocimientos previos (utilizar lenguaje 'prefabricado', etc.)
	- Compensar las carencias lingüísticas mediante procedimientos paralingüísticos o paratextuales: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Usar lenguaje corporal cultural pertinente (gestos, expresiones faciales, contacto visual o corporal, proxémica)▪ /Usar sonidos extralingüísticos y cualidades prosódicas convencionales.
	- Funciones comunicativas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Descripción de cualidades físicas de personas▪ Descripción de situaciones presentes▪ Expresión del gusto, la preferencia y el interés

-
- *Establecimiento y mantenimiento de la comunicación y organización del discurso*
-

- *Patrones sonoros, acentuales, rítmicos y de entonación*

- *Léxico oral de uso común (producción) relativo a identificación personal; vivienda; hogar y entorno; actividades de la vida diaria; familia y amigos; trabajo y ocupaciones; tiempo libre, ocio y deporte; alimentación y restauración.*

- *Estructuras sintáctico discursivas.*

(Decreto 19/2015, p. 183, 184)

As mentioned in the previous table, this proposal also includes the grammar and vocabulary contents students will learn in the different units. Therefore, the following table shows our organization of these contents based on the curriculum.

Table 4. Grammar and vocabulary contents of the proposal

	Grammar contents	Vocabulary contents
Getting started	Personal pronouns, possessive and pronouns, demonstratives (this, that, these and those)	Numbers, school materials, colors, family members, body parts, days and months
Unit 1	To be; have got	Description and personality
Unit 2	There is/ there are; a, an, some, any; how much/how many	House and furniture
Unit 3	Present Simple, adverbs of frequency and time prepositions	Activities and routines
Unit 4	Present Continuous, Present Simple and conjunction	Clothing
Unit 5	Can, must, adverbs of manner and imperative	Sports, action verbs, sport venues and equipment
Unit 6	Comparatives adjectives and (not)	Animals

	as...as structure	
Unit 7	There was/ there were, was/ were and adverbs of intensity	Food and adverbs of opinion
Unit 8	Past Simple	Occupations
Unit 9	Be going to, Present Continuous (future) and connectors	Weekend activities

(Marks and Addison, 2016)

5.3 Methodology

The methodology used for the design of this proposal aims to reduce students' speaking anxiety and develop their speaking skills at the same time.

In this proposal, students are considered as the centre of the learning process and the teacher as the expert who has the skills to guide them. For this reason, the teacher is not the protagonist in the different sessions. Once he/she has given the instructions on what students should do, lets them be the protagonists and also work in an autonomous way, but stays always available for their questions or doubts.

As Liu (2007) explained, the fear of being the centre of attention is one of the main causes of speaking anxiety. Therefore, we have tried to design a dynamic that gradually help students gain confidence and also build positive relation between them. During the first sessions, students will work in pairs, but in the following ones, they will be working in groups. These groups will get bigger with every passing session until the last one, in which students should do an oral presentation in front of the rest of the class.

Tsiplakides and Keramida's study (2009) also identified fear of making mistakes as an important reason why students feel this anxiety, so the teacher will establish some rules students should follow during the whole proposal. These rules will help them understand that mistakes are a natural part of the learning process. An example might be, *say don't worry, try it again!* when a classmate makes a mistake.

Lack of vocabulary, practice and preparation should be also taken into consideration if speaking anxiety want to be reduced, as Tadjouri (2017) affirmed. Taking this into consideration, the activities of the proposal are related to the vocabulary students learn in the different units and are designed in order

to give them the chance to practice and improve and also to give them time to prepare their interventions in class.

Buitrago and Ayala's study (2008) showed that cultural activities are also very important to reduce speaking anxiety. This proposal takes advantage of the fact that the vocabulary in unit 7 is about food, and includes an activity in which students will learn how people have breakfast in different countries.

The distribution within sessions, with the exception of the first one, will always follow the same pattern (a breathing exercise and then activities or games) in order to establish a kind of routine sessions, but will include different activities and games in each of them. This distribution wants students not to feel nervous before the sessions because they do not know what they are going to do, but at the same time, it wants students to feel motivated as they do not do the same things in every session.

Ultimately, the methodology used in this proposal is based on these authors' ideas and the results of their studies as well as on our own contributions such as the distribution of the proposal during the academic year, the design of specific activities for the students to use the grammar and the vocabulary they are studying in the corresponding unit or the inclusion of breathing exercises at the beginning of every session (with the exception of the last one).

The language of instruction during the proposal will be the target language, this means that all the activities and interventions should be done in English. The mother tongue, Spanish, will be only used when the teacher realizes that after some explanations of an activity or a doubt, the students are not understanding what he/she is saying or when after some attempts by the students to do some activity or ask a question, they feel extremely difficult to do it in English. In this regard, we have to keep in mind that this proposal wants to reduce speaking anxiety among students, so if a student experience a high level of this anxiety in any of the situations we have just mentioned, he/she may be allowed to speak in Spanish, otherwise we could have the opposite effect. Once he/she has become more relaxed, we can encourage him/her to try it again in English.

5.4 Timing

This proposal has been designed for an academic year, from September to May (in June there will be no sessions in order to give students time to focus on their final exams and on the end of the academic year). The sessions will take place one a month, that is, every three or four weeks, except for a month in which there should be two sessions in order to let June free. Our timing places two sessions in November, but teachers can adapt it as they consider appropriate. Furthermore, in cases where holiday or other circumstances do not allow teachers to follow this timing, it could also be adapted. For that, it is recommended to place sessions at least two weeks after the previous. The proposal includes 10 sessions of 50 minutes which correspond to the different units of the subject *Primera Lengua Extranjera (Inglés)*. In this table, the timing of this proposal can be found.

Table 5. Timing of the proposal

September	October	November
1st session - <i>Getting Started</i>	2nd session - <i>Unit 1</i>	3rd session - <i>Unit 2</i>
		4th session - <i>Unit 3</i>
December	January	February
5th session - <i>Unit 4</i>	6th session - <i>Unit 5</i>	7th session - <i>Unit 6</i>
March	April	May
8th session - <i>Unit 7</i>	9th session - <i>Unit 8</i>	10th session - <i>Unit 9</i>

5.5 Sessions and activities

This proposal includes different activities designed to help students achieve the objectives referred to in [section 4.1](#). The following tables shows all the activities, as well as the name, duration, organization, objective, materials and description of each of them. As

- 1st session:

Table 6. 1st session of the proposal

Activity 1	Duration	Organization
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Introduction	10'	The whole group
Specific objective	Materials	
To introduce the students what is the proposal about and to establish the rules students should follow in these sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Projector- Sheet of paper (available in Anexo I)- Poster board	
Description		
The teacher explains what is the proposal about the objectives intended to be achieved with it and how it is going to be assessed. He/ she also gives the students a sheet of paper with the rules students should follow in these sessions, for example, <i>every student should be applauded after an intervention</i> . These rules will be also posted on the wall of the classroom so the students can look at them when needed.		
Activity 2	Duration	Organization
Questionnaire	10'	The whole group
Specific objective	Materials	
To know how students feel when speaking in the EFL classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sheets of paper- Pens- Computer (Internet connection)- Online questionnaire (available in https://goo.gl/forms/peyFOZruXAPdY8yk1)	
Description		
Students fill a questionnaire about how they feel when speaking English in the EFL classroom or in front of people. With this information, the teacher may know the starting point of these students, such as if many of them are afraid to speak English in front of the rest of the class, if they feel nervous in speaking activities, if they have fear of being the centre of attention or making mistakes, etc. Students would do this questionnaire through Google Form if a computer room was available, if not, they would be given the questionnaire in paper form.		
Activity 3	Duration	Organization
"Well of fears" game	15'	The whole group
Specific objective	Materials	
To make students reflect on the negative emotions or feelings they experience when speaking in the EFL classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Papers- Pens- A box	
Description		

Students write down in a piece of paper their negative feelings when speaking in English with or in front of other people. Then they crumple or tear the paper and throw it into a box situated in the centre of the classroom. The teacher should explain the students that once their negative feelings fall into the well, they wouldn't even be able to get out again. Finally, students close their eyes and imagine themselves making an oral presentation successfully.

Activity 4	Duration	Organization
"There is a question for you" game	15'	The whole group
Specific objective	Materials	
To know classmates better for achieving a positive classroom atmosphere	- Flashcards - Computer (audio track)	
Description		
First of all, students are given a flashcard with a question. Then the teacher plays a song and all the students stand up and move around the class. When the teacher stops the music they should read their question to the closest classmate at that moment. For example, student A asks student B "do you have any brothers or sisters?" and student B answers. Then, this student asks student A "who is your favorite singer?" and he/she answers.		

- 2nd session:

Table 7. 2nd session of the proposal

Activity 5	Duration	Organization
"Back to back breathing"	10'	Pairs
Specific objective		Materials
To relax, to improve breath control and to manage anxiety		
Description		
All sessions will start with a breathing exercise. In this <i>back to back breathing</i> , students are divided into pairs. They should sit down in chairs back to back with their partner. Student A begins by inhaling deeply and then exhaling slowly. Student B feels the expansion in their classmate's back and tries to synchronize their breathing so that they both are breathing together in time (Dyer, 2018).		
Activity 6	Duration	Organization
Gap game	25'	Pairs
Specific objective		Materials
To describe people to different classmates		- Flashcards
Description		

Students stay divided into pairs. Each member of the pair is given a flashcard with a picture of a person. Student A and B look at their pictures and then describe the person to their partner. Then they have to find five differences between their pictures. The teacher will say *change partners!* every 6-7 minutes, so student A should now sit down with another student B.

Activity 7	Duration	Organization
Tongue twister	15'	Pairs
Specific objective		Materials
To improve vocalization through a tongue twister		- Sheets of paper
Description		
Students stay in pairs again. Each pair is given a tongue twister divided into two parts, that is, student A has the first part of it and student B has the second. They have to read it several times, order it and, then, try to memorize it. Finally, they should say the tongue twister without looking at the paper.		

- 3rd session:

Table 8. 3rd session of the proposal

Activity 8	Duration	Organization
"Tummy breathing"	10'	The whole group (each student individually)
Specific objective		Materials
To relax, to improve breath control and to manage anxiety		
Description		
This time students do the breathing exercise individually. They sit down correctly in their chairs and put their hands on their stomach. Now they breathe deeply through their nose and feel their hands rise, and then, when they slowly exhale through their mouths, they feel their hands lower (Dyer, 2018).		
Activity 9	Duration	Organization
House description	15'	Groups of 3-4
Specific objective		Materials
To order a house description by agreeing with the members of the groups		- Sheets of paper
Description		

Students are divided in groups of 3-4. Each member of the group is given a paper with a part of a house description. All the members have read their parts, and then the whole group should agree and order the description. Once they think the order is correct, all the members raise their hands. Finally, the teacher will reveal the correct order.

Activity 10	Duration	Organization
"My ideal house"	15'	Groups of 3-4
Specific objective		Materials

To describe a house and to practice memorizing

Description

Students stay divided in groups of 3-4. The teacher says a sentence and the different members of the groups should continue that sentence, that is, for example the teacher says *My ideal house is green*, student A in group 1 says *My ideal house is green and has four bedrooms*, students B in this group says *My ideal house is green, has four bedrooms and has a garden* and so on. The same will happen simultaneously in the other groups. When a student does not remember what their classmates have said, the game starts again in his/her group. Sometimes the teacher will say *Change of direction!* so the order students were following to participate now takes the opposite direction.

In the last 10 minutes of this session students will carry out their self-assessment. They should complete a table the teacher will give them in a sheet of paper (available in [section 4.6.1](#))

- 4th session:

Table 9. 4th session of the proposal

Activity 11	Duration	Organization
"Balloon breathing"	10'	The whole group (each student individually)

Specific objective	Materials
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To relax, to improve breath control and to manage anxiety

Description

Students do the breathing exercise individually again. They sit down in their chairs in a comfortable position and place their hands around their mouth, as if they were about to blow up a balloon. They take a deep breath in through and then exhale slow with their mouths, while they spread their hands as if they are blowing up a balloon. They should try to blow up that balloon as big as they can (Dyer, 2018).

Activity 12	Duration	Organization
"My daily routine"	30'	Pairs; groups of 4-6

Specific objective	Materials
To talk about routines	- Stickers - Sheet of paper

Description
Students are divided into pairs. Student A is the interviewer and student B is the interviewee. The teacher gives them stickers to pinpoint their roles and also a paper with the questions they can ask in the interview. The interviewer should write down the information about his/her partner. Then, students change the stickers and with that the roles, and do the activity again. Now, student A should tell his/her partner the information he/she has gathered. For example: <i>You get up at 7:30 and go to school at 8:30</i> , etc. Then, student B should do the same about student A. After this part, students are organized in groups of 4-6. One by one, students tell the rest of the group about their partner in this way: <i>María gets up at 7:30 and goes to school at 8:30</i> .

In the last 10 minutes of this session students will carry out their group work assessment. Each group should complete a table the teacher will give them in a sheet of paper (available in [section 4.6.1](#))

- 5th session:

Table 10. 5th session of the proposal

Activity 13	Duration	Organization
"Shoulder Roll Breathing"	10'	The whole group (each student individually)

Specific objective	Materials
To relax, to improve breath control and to manage anxiety	

Description
Students sit down correctly in their chairs and take a slow deep breath in through their nose while they raise their shoulders up towards their ears. Then they breathe out through their mouth while they low their shoulders. They repeat the exercise slowly, moving their shoulders up and down (Dyer, 2018).

Activity 14	Duration	Organization
"Who is wearing...?"	15'	Groups of 5-6

Specific objective	Materials
To describe how a person is dressed	

Description

Students are divided into groups of 5-6. Student A starts by saying the clothes that a member of the group is wearing but without saying his/her name. The rest of the group have to guess who student A is talking about. Now is time for student B to do the same, and then for student C, and so on.

Activity 15	Duration	Organization
"Celebrities' clothes"	25'	Groups of 5-6; the whole group
Specific objective		Materials
To describe how a person is dressed		- Papers - Pens - Pictures
Description		
Students stay in the same groups. The teacher will give each group a picture of a celebrity. Each member of the group should write a sentence about how this person is dressed. Once they have finished, all the members read their sentence out loud for the rest of the group-mates (10'). After that, the teacher says the name of one of the celebrities and the members of the group who have it should stand up and read the sentences they have written (15')		

- 6th session:

Table 11. 6th session of the proposal

Activity 16	Duration	Organization
"Take 5 breathing"	10'	The whole group (each student individually)
Specific objective		Materials
To relax, to improve breath control and to manage anxiety		
Description		
Students sit down correctly in their chairs and rest an open hand in front of them. Then, they place their pointer finger in the base of their thumb. Now, they breath in slowly through their nose while their pointer finger goes up to the top of their thumb, and breathe out slowly through their mouth while their pointer finger goes down their thumb. They should continue breathing in and out as they trace their whole hand (Dyer, 2018).		
Activity 17	Duration	Organization
"Guessing sports" game	10'	Pairs; groups of 6-8
Specific objective		Materials
To guess sports through mime and to reduce the fear of being the centre of attention		- Flashcards

Description		
Students are divided into groups of 6-8 and, within the group, in pairs. Each pair gets a flashcard with a sport they have to mimic. The rest of the group have to guess which sport they are mimicking. Then is time for another pair to do the same exercise. Once all the pairs have participated, pair 1 picks a flashcard again.		
Activity 18	Duration	Organization
Dialogues about sports	30'	Pairs; the whole group
Specific objective		Materials
To practice and perform a dialogue about sports		- Sheet of paper - Flashcards
Description		
Students stay in pairs as they were in the previous activity. Each pair is given a brief dialogue where two friends are talking about a sport. They will have 15 minutes to read it carefully and to practice the pronunciation. After that, the teacher will pick a flashcard with a sport. The pair that has been working with the dialogue about that sport has to stand in front of the classroom and read/perform it.		

- 7th session:

Table 12. 7th session of the proposal

Activity 19	Duration	Organization
"Elephant Breathing"	10'	The whole group (each student individually)
Specific objective		Materials
To relax, to improve breath control and to manage anxiety		
Description		
Students sit down correctly in their chairs and put their arms dangling in front of them as an elephant's trunk. They breathe in through their nose while they raise their arms high, and then breathe out through their mouth as they swing their arms down (Dyer, 2018).		
Activity 20	Duration	Organization
"Imaginary safari"	30'	Groups of 4-5; the whole group
Specific objective		Materials
To talk about animals, to prepare a presentation in groups and to search for information on the Internet		- Computers
Description		
Students are divided into groups of 4-5. Each group is assigned an animal and given a worksheet they have to complete with information about the animal. For that, students		

should use the Internet (8'). A language laboratory or a computer room is needed to do this activity. If it is not possible, students will look for the information at home or at the library as a homework exercise and, then, they will bring it to the classroom.

Once they have completed the worksheet, each group have to prepare a brief oral presentation about that animal. Each member of the group will talk about an aspect, for example, student A talks about where the lion lives, student B about what the lion eats, etc. (10'). Each group has 4 minutes to expose (12').

In the last 10 minutes of this session students will carry out their group work assessment. Each group should complete a table the teacher will give them in a sheet of paper (available in [section 4.6.1](#))

- 8th session:

Table 13. 8th session of the proposal

Activity 21	Duration	Organization
"Bubble Breathing"	10'	The whole group (each student individually)
Specific objective		Materials
To relax, to improve breath control and to manage anxiety		
Description		
Students sit down correctly in their chairs and close their eyes. They imagine they are holding a bubble wand so they breathe in slowly through their nose and then breathe out through their mouth imaging you are blowing bubbles into the room (Dyer, 2018).		
Activity 22	Duration	Organization
"Breakfast around the world" cultural activity	30'	The whole group (each student individually)
Specific objective		Materials
To watch a video about food and to prepare a presentation individually		- Computer (internet connection) - Youtube video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ry1E1uzPSU0) - Papers - Pens - A ball
Description		
Students watch a video called <i>What does the world eat for breakfast?</i> that explains what		

people have for breakfast in 17 different countries (5'). After that, students should prepare a very brief presentation (1-2 minutes) talking about what they have for breakfast, the differences between their breakfast and other countries' breakfast (10'). During the last 15 minutes of the activity, the teacher will throw a small ball to a student. This student should stand up and perform his/her brief presentation.

This activity will be the first one in which students should perform a presentation individually and in front of the rest of the class. For that reason, the teacher could start throwing the ball to the students he/she has observed that do not suffer from high levels of speaking anxiety.

In the last 10 minutes of this session students will carry out their self-assessment. They should complete a table the teacher will give them in a sheet of paper (available in [section 4.6.1](#)).

- 9th session:

Table 14. 9th session of the proposal

Activity 23	Duration	Organization
"Bumblebee Breathing"	10'	The whole group (each student individually)
Specific objective		Materials
To relax, to improve breath control and to manage anxiety		
Description		
Students sit down correctly in their chairs, place the tips of their pointer fingers in their ears and close their eyes. They breathe in through their nose and then hum quietly as they breathe out (Dyer, 2018).		
Activity 24	Duration	Organization
"Party guests" role-play	40'	
Specific objective		Materials
To talk about jobs and to prepare a presentation individually		- Papers - Pens - A ball
Description		
Students are going to pretend to attend a party where each of them will play the role of a party guest. People at this party don't know each other, so guests should introduce themselves. For that, each student should prepare a brief presentation (2-3 minutes) including his/her name, age and a description of his/her profession (15'). During the last 20 minutes of the activity, the teacher will throw a small ball to a student. This student		

should stand up and perform his/her brief presentation.

*Homework: since the next unit includes contents about places in town and weekend activities, students should prepare a 4-minute presentation called "my perfect weekend" for the next and final session. In this presentation, they will talk about their favorites weekend activities and where do they practice them. The teacher will give them some sheets of paper with different models and with tips to do a good presentation. If students have any doubt or problem, the teacher will be available to help them until the beginning of the final session.

- 10th session:

Table 15. 10th session of the proposal

Activity 25	Duration	Organization
"My perfect weekend"	45' (if necessary, recess time may be used)	The whole group (each student individually)
Specific objective		Materials
To perform an oral presentation individually and in front of the rest of the class putting into practice the aspects learned during the proposal		- Projector
Description		
Students perform a 4-minute presentation called "my perfect weekend" talking about their favorites weekend activities and where do they practice them.		

In the last 5-10 minutes of this session students will carry their evaluation of the proposal. They should answer some questions the teacher will give them in a sheet of paper (available in [section 4.6.2](#)).

5.6 Assessment

This proposal's assessment is divided into two sections: the learning assessment and the proposal's evaluation itself.

5.6.1 Learning assessment




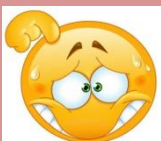
The assessment is fundamental in the development of an intervention proposal, but it could be a double-edged sword in this case. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, some students feel speaking anxiety because they are afraid of receiving negative evaluation. Taking this into account, this learning assessment focuses on participation, behavior and collaboration with peers, more than on a perfect use of the FL.

Formative assessment will be carried out during the whole intervention proposal. This assessment is based on the observation of students during the activities in order to check how the teaching-progress develops. For that purpose, the following tools will be used:

1. Self-assessment table

Students should complete this self-assessment table at the end of the 3rd and the 8th session to evaluate their own work at the beginning and at the end of the proposal and to become aware of their successes and mistakes. Furthermore, with this table the teacher can contrast what students think with what he/she thinks and analyze how students perceive their learning process, that is, if they think they have improved when they work individually or not. The student should write his/her name next to the table.

Table 16. Self-assessment table





	Always 	Sometimes 	Rarely 	Never 
I listen to the teacher when he/she talks				
I ask for help when I don't understand				
I can work in pairs				
I can work in groups				
I help my classmates when they need it				
I use English when working in pairs or groups				
I use the specific vocabulary of the unit in oral presentations				

2. Group-assessment table

Students should complete this group-assessment table at the end of the 4rd and the 7th session to reflect on their teamwork at the beginning and at the end of the proposal. With this table, the teacher can contrast if they think they have

improved when they work in groups or not. The students should write the group members next to the table.

Table 17. Group-assessment table

	Always 	Sometimes 	Rarely 	Never 
We collaborate with each other				
We share responsibilities				
We take turns speaking				
We use English				
We finish our tasks in time				
We help each other				
We respect our group-mates opinions				

3. Final task assessment

The oral presentation students should prepare for the last session will be assessed according to the following rubric:

Table 18. Final task rubric

Speaking Assessment		Name: _____
		Date: _____
Category	Your score	Guide
Grammar 25 points		24-25 <i>Excellent</i> . Few errors; communication of ideas is clear.
		22-23 <i>Very good</i> . One or two errors, but communication is mostly clear.
		20-21 <i>Good</i> . Several errors in syntax, but main ideas are mostly clear.
		18-19 <i>Fair</i> . Noticeable errors that occasionally confuse meaning.
		12-17 <i>Weak</i> . Language is marked by errors. Listeners' attention is diverted to the errors rather than the message.

Vocabulary 20 points	Meaning is often unclear or broken.
	0-11 <i>Unacceptable</i> . Communication is impeded. Too many errors in this task for a student at this level.
	20 <i>Excellent</i> . Correct selection of words and idioms. Some variety of vocabulary.
	18-19 <i>Very good</i> . Correct selection of words and idioms. Some variety of vocabulary.
	16-17 <i>Good</i> . Mostly correct choice of vocabulary. Meaning is clear.
	14-15 <i>Fair</i> . Noticeable vocabulary errors that occasionally confuse meaning. Reliance on simple vocabulary to communicate.
	12-13 <i>Weak</i> . Many vocabulary errors. Listeners' attention is diverted to the errors rather than the message. Meaning is often unclear or broken.
	0-11 <i>Unacceptable</i> . Too many errors in this task for a student at this level. Communication is impeded.
Fluency 30 points	29-30 <i>Excellent</i> . No hesitations at all
	27-28 <i>Very good</i> . Hesitations in one or two places but immediately continued.
	24-26 <i>Good</i> . Occasional hesitations but recovered well.
	21-23 <i>Fair</i> . Noticeable gaps that catch listeners' attention usually followed by recovery.
	12-20 <i>Weak</i> . Several short periods of silence. Several gaps that disrupt the flow of information. Listeners' attention is diverted to the gaps rather than the message.
	0-11 <i>Unacceptable</i> . Periods of silence. Gaps without good recovery.
Pronunciation 25 points	24-25 <i>Excellent</i> . Few errors; native-like pronunciation.
	22-23 <i>Very good</i> . One or two errors, but main ideas are understood without problem.
	20-21 <i>Good</i> . Several pronunciation errors, but main ideas are understood without problem.
	18-19 <i>Fair</i> . Noticeable pronunciation errors that occasionally confuse meaning.
	12-17 <i>Weak</i> . Language is marked by pronunciation errors. Listeners' attention is diverted to the errors rather than the message. Meaning is often unclear.

0-11 *Unacceptable*. Too many errors in this task for a student at this level. Communication is impeded.

Your score: _____

Comments: _____

(Coombe, Folse and Hubley, 2007, p. 127)

Summative assessment will also be included in the proposal, in order to give students a final mark. The table below shows the percentage in which that final mark is divided.

Table 19. Summative-assessment table

DAILY WORK	Participation in class	10%
	Collaboration with their peers	10%
	Behavior	10%
	Self-assessment	10%
	Group-assessment	10%
FINAL TASK		50%

This assessment is designed for the students to understand that the final task is important but aspects as participation or collaboration are determining, in other words, that their effort and dedication will be decisive in their final mark.

5.6.2 Proposal's evaluation

Apart from the learning assessment, the intervention proposal will also be evaluated. Once it has been implemented, its evaluation will serve to detect problems or difficulties and to introduce changes and improvements. For that purpose, the following tools will be used:

1. Student's evaluation

As mentioned before, students will carry their evaluation of the proposal in the last 5-10 minutes of the last session. They should answer the following questions the teacher will give them in a sheet of paper:

- What activity or game did you like the most?
- What activity or game did you like less?
- What has been the easiest activity or game for you?
- What has been the hardest activity or game for you?
- What has been the funniest activity or game for you?

- What has been the most boring activity or game for you?
- Has this proposal helped you to feel better when speaking in the EFL classroom?
- Would you change anything?

2. Teacher's evaluation

Table 20. Teacher's evaluation table

Indicators	Yes	No	Comments
1. The objectives included are appropriate			
2. Students have had more opportunities to develop speaking skills working in groups			
3. The activities are motivating and encourage student's participation			
4. The materials and resources used are appropriate			
5. Students showed less fear of speaking in the EFL classroom			

6. DISCUSSION

This project aims to design an intervention proposal that helps students reduce their speaking anxiety in the EFL classroom, since this problem affects the development of the speaking skill and, therefore, the process of teaching and learning.

Taking into consideration the literature review and also the previous studies, we expect this proposal to have the following benefits:

- to create a positive classroom environment
- to make students gain self-confidence
- to give students the chance to take advantage of group work
- to help students improve their speaking skill
- to make students view mistakes as a part of learning and not as failures

Although the proposal's main objective is to reduce speaking anxiety, we are aware that not every student in the classroom will suffer from it. However, we have tried to design a proposal that benefits all the students, so, if some of them won't reduce their speaking anxiety because they do not experience it, they will be able at least to improve their speaking skill with this proposal, in addition to learn how to work in pairs and groups and to be the protagonist of their own learning.

Apart from that, we have tried to design a proposal as realistic as possible in order to implement it in the future. Although the objective could be easier to achieve if the proposal includes more sessions, we have taken into account that we cannot design it for all the English sessions 1ESO-students attend. There must be time for all the contents to be learned and all the skills to be developed. This is why the proposal takes 10 sessions distributed in 9 of the 10 months of the academic year. We have also paid attention to equipment. Some activities are designed to be done in the computer room or the language laboratory. However, it is possible that these spaces are not available, so we have tried to provide alternatives for these activities to be done.

We also expect students to find this proposal motivating as they work in pairs or groups most of the time and also take an active role in their learning instead of being just receivers of information.

It might also be mentioned that designing the assessment for this proposal has been difficult as it is a factor that can promote speaking anxiety. For this

reason, we have tried to design it so that students could be motivated as it places more emphasis on their effort and collaboration than on a perfect use of the foreign language.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions we have reached upon the completion of this project are the following ones.

The speaking skill is an indispensable requirement for learning a language, as it makes it possible for learners to communicate in an effective way. For this reason, teaching methods should place great emphasis on trying to develop it.

Speaking anxiety is one of the factors that can hinder the development of this skill and, unfortunately, it affects a high percentage of the students at different levels. Although it can depend on particular personality predispositions, there are many other factors that can promote it and can be tackled in the EFL classroom as in the case of lack of vocabulary, lack of preparation or fear of making mistakes.

Despite this, we believe that insufficient attention is paid to a problem that can impede students' improvement in the teaching and learning process. This is why we have reached the conclusion that a change is needed. It is questionable whether students' final task of a subject is, for example, an oral presentation if they haven't practiced during the whole academic year. They need to practice and make mistakes, so they can correct and learn from them. Furthermore, if they are not given the opportunity to improve before this final task or other speaking activities, their anxiety will only get worse.

Thanks to the research we have made, we conclude that the best way to help students fight against speaking anxiety is by creating a supportive classroom environment in which students trust each other and the teacher and also feel comfortable. Apart from that, it is also very important to help students gain confidence, to make them the protagonists of their own learning and to consider mistakes as learning opportunities. Furthermore, to overcome this problem, working in pairs and groups is also essential. We must emphasize this type of work in this regard. Working in pairs or groups helps students to develop team building and group processes, that is, to develop collaborative and cooperative skills, it builds their confidence and it also provides a preparation for their future careers.

This project has provided the consolidation of the following competences, among others:

Table 21. Competences

<i>Competencias específicas:</i>	
CG09	<i>Conocer la normativa y organización institucional del sistema educativo y modelos de mejora de la calidad con aplicación a los centros de enseñanza.</i>
<i>Competencias específicas</i>	
CE17	<i>Transformar los currículos en programas de actividades y de trabajo.</i>
CE18	<i>Adquirir criterios de selección y elaboración de materiales educativos.</i>
CE26	<i>Adquirir experiencia en la planificación, la docencia y la evaluación de las materias correspondientes a la especialización.</i>
CE28	<i>Dominar las destrezas y habilidades sociales necesarias para fomentar un clima que facilite el aprendizaje y la convivencia.</i>
CE29	<i>Participar en las propuestas de mejora en los distintos ámbitos de actuación a partir de la reflexión basada en la práctica.</i>

(Gavela, 2017, p. 2,3)

We also hope that this research could be the starting point for new researches and the future implementation of the proposal.

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ANNEX 1. CLASSROOM RULES

CLASSROOM RULES

1. Laugh with anyone, but laugh at no one.
2. Treat others as you would like to be treated.
3. Say *don't worry, try it again!* when a classmate makes a mistake
4. Help your classmates every time they need it
5. Ask for help every time you need it
6. Clap for your classmates every time they finish an intervention
7. Pay attention to your classmates' interventions
8. Do not disturb people who are working

Figure 1. Classroom rules